

**THE DEPICTION OF ARTISTIC PSYCHOLOGISM IN KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S
SHORT STORY BLISS****Xajiyeva Feruza Melsovna**

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Abstract. *Katherine Mansfield's contribution to the development of the modernist short story is significant. Her short fiction, particularly "Bliss", stands as one of the finest examples of early twentieth-century psychological prose. This paper examines the depiction of artistic psychologism in Katherine Mansfield's "Bliss" (1920). It argues that Mansfield uses impressionistic description, symbolic imagery, and interior focalization to portray the complexities of Bertha Young's emotional world. The analysis demonstrates how the protagonist's inner perceptions shape her understanding of reality, revealing the instability of bliss as a psychological state and illustrating Mansfield's mastery in representing the nuances of human consciousness.*

Keywords: *artistic psychologism, Bertha Young, pear tree symbolism, interior monologue, emotional depth, inner consciousness*

Аннотация. *Вклад Кэтрин Мэнсфилд в развитие модернистского короткого рассказа является значительным. Её малая проза, особенно рассказ «Блаженство», считается одним из лучших образцов психологической прозы начала XX века. В данной работе рассматривается изображение художественного психологизма в рассказе Кэтрин Мэнсфилд «Блаженство» (1920). Утверждается, что Мэнсфилд использует импрессионистическое описание, символическую образность и внутреннюю фокализацию для передачи сложности эмоционального мира Берты Янг. Анализ показывает, как внутренние восприятия героини формируют её понимание реальности, раскрывая нестабильность блаженства как психологического состояния и демонстрируя мастерство Мэнсфилд в изображении тончайших нюансов человеческого сознания.*

Ключевые слова: *художественный психологизм, Берта Янг, символика грушевого дерева, внутренний монолог, эмоциональная глубина, внутреннее сознание.*

Annotatsiya. *Ketrin Mensfildning modernist qisqa hikoya rivojiga qo'shgan hissasi juda katta. Uning hikoyalari, ayniqsa "Baxtiyorlik" ("Bliss"), XX asr boshidagi psixologik nasrning eng yorqin namunalaridan biri hisoblanadi. Ushbu maqolada Ketrin Mensfildning "Baxtiyorlik" (1920) hikoyasida badiiy psixologizmning tasviri o'rganiladi. Maqolada aytilishicha, Mensfild Bertha Yangning murakkab hissiy dunyosini tasvirlash uchun impressionistik tasvir, ramziy obrazlar va ichki fokalizatsiyadan foydalanadi. Tahlil qahramonning ichki idroklari uning reallikni anglash jarayonini qanday shakllantirishini ko'rsatib, baxtiyorlikning psixologik holat sifatida beqarorligini ochib beradi hamda inson ongining nozik jihatlarini tasvirlashdagi Mensfild mahoratini namoyish etadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *badiiy psixologizm, Berta Yang, nok daraxti ramzi, ichki monolog, hissiy chuqurlik, ichki ong.*

Introduction

Katherine Mansfield is celebrated as one of the pioneers of the modernist short story, notable for her subtle depictions of emotion, interiority, and psychological nuance. Her short story "Bliss" exemplifies this craft through its portrayal of a single evening in the life of Bertha Young, a young woman overwhelmed by an inexplicable sense of happiness. Rather than relying on plot-driven events, Mansfield structures the narrative around shifting emotional states, sensory impressions, and symbolic images, reflecting the modernist focus on subjective experience. Although "Bliss" has been studied from feminist, stylistic, narratological, and symbolic perspectives, its artistic psychologism—its representation of inner life through artistic form—remains central to understanding the story. Artistic psychologism refers to the literary technique of revealing psychological states indirectly, through imagery, symbols, impressions, and narrative style rather than explicit analysis.[1;28]

Artistic Psychologism as a Literary Technique. Psychologism in literature is a way of writing that focuses on the thoughts, feelings, and inner life of characters rather than just their actions or events. In artistic psychologism, writers not only show what a character thinks or feels but also use storytelling techniques, symbols, and imagery to make the inner world more vivid and meaningful.

The term psychologism is associated with terms such as psychological analysis, psychological image, psychological image, psychological novel, psychological story and psychology. In A. B. Yesin's interpretation, artistic psychologism is the world of imagination of the character of the work, using specific artistic means of thought, thoughts, reflections very complete, detailed and in-depth expression. He was one of the first to conduct research on the topic of psyche in the science of Russian literary studies.[4;176] Chernishevskiy says that psychological analysis can be diverse, and when one author tries to reveal the edges of the character, another – shows the influence of society and life on the formation of the character; the third – describes the relationship of behavior with emotions; the fourth—describes the analysis of passions.[2;30]

Scholars of modernist fiction widely recognize the early twentieth century as a period in which psychological depiction became one of the defining artistic aims of literature. Dorrit Cohn in her influential study „Transparent Minds” argues that modernist writers developed new narrative forms to present consciousness directly, including interior monologue, narrated monologue, and free indirect style. These techniques allow readers to access characters' mental processes in a way that mirrors psychological experience rather than logical plot structure. [3;15]

Similarly, Robert Humphrey identifies stream of consciousness as a key method for revealing the flow of subjective impressions, memories, and emotions. Humphrey emphasizes that modernist writers sought to express the shifting quality of mental life, capturing impressions as they appear and disappear in the mind.[6;45]

In modernist short fiction specifically, scholars such as Sydney Janet Kaplan and Vincent O'Sullivan highlight that psychological depth becomes more important than traditional plot. They note that writers like Katherine Mansfield create narratives where emotional atmosphere, momentary sensations, and symbolic details reveal the character's inner world. Mansfield's impressionistic style aligns with what Brian Richardson describes as the modernist effort to represent "the dynamic processes of thought" rather than external action.[7;175-188]

Katherine Mansfield revolutionized the twentieth-century English short story. Her finest works free themselves from conventional plots and closed endings, giving the genre, for the first

time, the expansiveness of interior life, the poetry of feeling, and the blurred edges of personality. She continues to be taught worldwide not only because of her historical importance, but also because her prose demonstrates how to enter the subtle emotional worlds of ordinary lives in ways that remain vivid and powerful today. Her fiction retains its relevance largely because of its open-endedness—its ability to raise unsettling questions about identity, belonging, and desire. Mansfield's creative years were marked by loneliness, illness, jealousy, and alienation—experiences that deeply shaped her writing. These emotional struggles are reflected in her often bitter portrayals of marital and family relationships among middle-class characters.

Her short stories are also notable for their use of stream of consciousness and impressionistic technique. Like the Russian writer Anton Chekhov, Mansfield focused on psychological nuance atmosphere, and the small moments that reveal the complexity of human life.

Artistic Psychologism in “Bliss”

From the beginning, Bertha's bliss is depicted as a heightened emotional state without rational explanation. Her happiness is expressed through sensory imagery—light, colors, textures, and fleeting impressions—which foregrounds emotion over intellect. Dorrit Cohn explains that modernist psychological fiction often conveys interiority through impressionistic description, where physical sensations reveal mental states.[3;50] Similarly, Mansfield transforms everyday objects, such as fabrics, flowers, and food, into extensions of Bertha's emotional life. Through these impressionistic impressions, the story demonstrates artistic psychologism by showing rather than telling Bertha's inner experience. The pear tree stands at the center of Bertha's emotional perception. Its whiteness, stillness, and beauty mirror the harmony she imagines in her own life. Hanson notes that Mansfield frequently employs objects as symbolic extensions of consciousness, turning external images into psychological mirrors.[5;34] Poulot emphasizes that Mansfield's use of natural imagery in *Bliss* functions as a reflection of emotional states rather than a mere description of the external world.[7;195-210]

The pear tree, therefore, operates as a projection of Bertha's idealized self-image and her sense of emotional perfection, illustrating how artistic psychologism merges symbol and consciousness. Pearl Fulton's silence and mystery allow Bertha to project her own emotional expectations onto her. Their shared appreciation of the pear tree becomes, in Bertha's mind, a moment of profound emotional connection. Kaplan observes that Mansfield often depicts emotional misinterpretation and idealization, showing how subjective perception shapes interpersonal relations. Pearl's role demonstrates that artistic psychologism in *Bliss* is not limited to the protagonist's internal state but also includes the psychological projections onto others.[7;175-188]

The emotional climax of *Bliss* occurs when Bertha becomes aware of the intimate relationship between her husband, Harry, and her friend, Pearl. This moment is not dramatized with dialogue or action; instead, it unfolds entirely within Bertha's consciousness. The narrative emphasizes her sudden shock, the fragmentation of her thoughts, and the physical sensations of surprise and disbelief—a racing heartbeat, a tightening chest, and the abrupt interruption of her previous calm.

Throughout the story, Bertha's bliss is built on idealized perceptions of her life, her marriage, and her social interactions. The revelation shatters these perceptions instantly. She no longer sees the party, the house, or even the pear tree with the same clarity; every object and interaction is refracted through a lens of disillusionment.

The sudden collapse of her emotional state demonstrates the fragility of happiness when it depends solely on perception rather than reality. Her mind struggles to reconcile the joyous illusions she has constructed with the stark truth she now perceives, leaving her in a state of psychological disorientation. The story ends with this internal disruption unresolved. Mansfield does not provide any external action to restore equilibrium; instead, the collapse of Bertha's inner world is left open, highlighting the impermanence and instability of bliss as a psychological state. In this way, the narrative itself becomes a mirror of her consciousness—fragmented, impressionistic, and emotionally raw.

Taken together, these narrative strategies demonstrate that “Bliss” is not simply a story about marital betrayal but an exploration of how psychological illusions are formed, sustained, and ultimately shattered. Mansfield's use of artistic psychologism allows readers to witness the intensity of Bertha's inner life while recognizing its disconnection from reality. Through symbolism, impressionism, and subjective narration, Mansfield portrays emotional experience as unstable, imaginative, and deeply vulnerable to misinterpretation.

Conclusion: Artistic psychologism plays an essential role in shaping both the structure and meaning of “Bliss.” Mansfield uses symbolism, sensory details, and a focus on Bertha Young's inner thoughts to show the complexity of her emotional world. The story illustrates how personal feelings can reshape reality, as Bertha's emotions lead her to misinterpret the people and events around her. In the end, “Bliss” highlights the modernist interest in the inner life and demonstrates Mansfield's skill in portraying psychological experience through literary techniques.

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